

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 17, and 37 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; and claims 2, 3, 5, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25, 29, 30, 33, 34, 38, 39, 41, 44 and 45 have been amended. Thus, claims 2-16, 18-36, and 38-45 are presently pending. Claims 3, 9, 16, 19, 25, 29, 30, 33, and 44 are independent.

In the Office Action dated September 28, 2004, claims 3, 4, 9-12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 25-29, 30-33, and 44 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As suggested in the Action, claims 3, 9, 16, 19, 25, 29, 30, 33, and 44 have been rewritten in independent form and should therefore be in condition for allowance. Claims 10-12 depend from claim 9, and claim 20 depends from claim 19, claims 26-28 depend from claim 25, and claims 31 and 32 depend from claim 30. Accordingly, these "original" dependent claims should also be in condition for allowance. Furthermore, the necessary amendments have been made so that claims 2, 5-8, and 13-15 now depend from claim 3, claims 18, 21-24, and 34-36 now depend from claim 19, and claims 38-43 and 45 now depend from claim 44. Thus, these "amended" dependent claims should also be in condition for allowance.

Applicant notes that claims 13 and 30 have been amended to address the rejection made under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2. It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicant further notes that an Information Disclosure Statement was filed in the present application on February 23, 2004. The Office Action, however, does not include Form PTO

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1449, nor is there any indication that the Statement has been considered. Nonetheless, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are patentably distinguishable over the prior art references cited in the Statement.

In view of the foregoing, the present application should now be in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (800) 445-3460.

A 1-month Petition for Extension of Time accompanies this Amendment, along with a check in the amount of \$60.00 for the petition fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a). A check in the amount of \$600.00 also accompanies this Amendment for the six (6) additional independent claims. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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